Sustaining State Policy Infrastructure for Impact on Poverty

A Learning Project of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation

Gita Gulati-Partee

January 2013

The lives of individuals and the quality of life in all communities are affected directly by state legislative and administrative policy. From a foundation's perspective, funding policy and civic engagement is a strategy for large-scale impact. (See *Leveraging Limited Dollars* from the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy and *Helping People and Places Move Out of Poverty: Progress and Learning 2010* from the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation.)

Given the Babcock Foundation's mission of helping people and places in the Southeastern U.S. move out of poverty, we support organizations throughout our region who advocate with low-wealth people on state policies driving education, economic development, housing, predatory lending, workforce development, immigration and a host of other issues that are significant levers for advancing or impeding opportunity and equity. As of October 2012, we support 40 state policy organizations with grants and with Network Officer time committed to understanding each state's context, advising grantees when appropriate, assisting with convening partners, and brokering relationships with other funders.

We commissioned the attached scan of state policy infrastructure in the Southeastern U.S. as a learning project for our board and staff. Our research included only Babcock Foundation grantees, so it is a limited but rich scan from the perspectives of 37 organizations in 11 states. The report reinforces, from a grantee survey and personal interviews, key qualities of effective state policy work that we observe in our ongoing relationships with organizations and networks:

- *Playing well together is necessary.* Statewide webs of policy advocacy groups that coordinate their various strategies and resources to act collectively have more impact than organizations acting alone. Anchor organizations that work across policy issues and build the capacity of other players are essential.

- *Impact is complex.* Both "leaping" and "creeping" times are critically important. During the "creeping" times when large-scale wins are politically impossible, effective policy networks and organizations are holding the line against policies that would harm low- and moderate-wealth people. They are also researching and refining new options, adapting strategy, building new allies, and continuing to enlarge their base of grassroots constituents. Policy wins that achieve large-scale impact on large numbers of people happen in the occasional "leaping" moments of opportunity when the wins are dependent on organizational and network capacity built during the "creeping" times.

- *Pragmatism wins.* The most effective advocacy brings together the broad range of strategic allies necessary to move a particular issue, including a base of low- and moderate-wealth people, their typical allies, and unusual allies such as private-sector players.

Specific goals and strategy are constantly adapted based on data and on deep analysis. What's possible prevails over what would be perfect. Principled compromise lies behind most big policy wins by effective networks of partners.

- *Capacity matters.* Organizational and network capacity includes clear mission, a base of constituents, relationships with power brokers, adaptive strategy, strong state and national partnerships, expertise in policy areas and politics, leadership, and adequate reliable resources—all focused on impact and sustained over time.

The state policy organizations participating in this study deliver clear and instructive recommendations to funders, which the Babcock Foundation accepts for itself and endorses for other funders' consideration. They constitute an investment strategy to strengthen existing organizations and expand statewide policy infrastructure so it is more diversified and connected:

- *Grow the funding pie.* State policy groups working to increase equity and opportunity and reduce poverty are under-resourced and out-spent. They present opportunities for funders to invest in larger-scale impact. The Babcock Foundation is committed to encouraging funder colleagues to consider supporting state policy impact and to brokering relationships between state policy organizations and funders.

- *Provide multi-year general operating support,* which allows organizations to be nimble when new opportunities for impact emerge, stable during lean times, and flexible in building their capacity for the long term. The Babcock Foundation will continue to support state policy organizations with multi-year general operating grants and networks with "glue" money necessary for collaboration.

- *Invest in the adaptive capacity of organizations and networks.* The ability to understand a rapidly changing environment and adapt accordingly requires core organizational capacities such as: framing issues and telling a story in order to communicate effectively; using modern technology and social media for strategic purposes; investing in leadership development and succession plans throughout the organization; integrating racial analysis and equity into policy efforts; and developing truly sustainable financial models. The Babcock Foundation will continue to invest in adaptive capacity of grantees through general operating grants, respectful conversations about capacity, and a deeper look at the communications needs of our state policy partners.

- *Build true statewide infrastructure, not just organizations.* In every state, and some more than others, gaps exist in policy issues addressed and activities (such as organizing, research, legislative advocacy) that round out a robust state policy infrastructure.

Connections among existing groups and with national partners can create new synergies and more impact. The Babcock Foundation will continue our strategy of investing in both networks and organizations in order to build out stronger infrastructure.

We also asked the researchers to help us think about responsible exit strategy. With Babcock support for several state policy groups exceeding a decade, we ask the perpetual funders' question about balance between continuing investment in long-standing grantees and making room within our limited resources for promising new work. Exit is always possible if the foundation's priorities shift or if a specific grantee is no longer effective and not improving. Our conclusion is that state policy remains a critical lever for improving people's access to opportunity and advancing equity. Therefore, we intend to stay the course of investing in effective state policy work that adapts to changing circumstances with innovative approaches and a clear focus on helping people and communities build assets and escape poverty.

To our partners who participated in this study, thank you. We look forward to future impact and learning together.

To our present and potential funding partners, we look forward to more conversation and partnership to build stronger state policy infrastructure in the Southeastern U.S.

Gladys Washington,
Program Director
Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation

A Report to the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation
Gita Gulati-Partee
January 2013

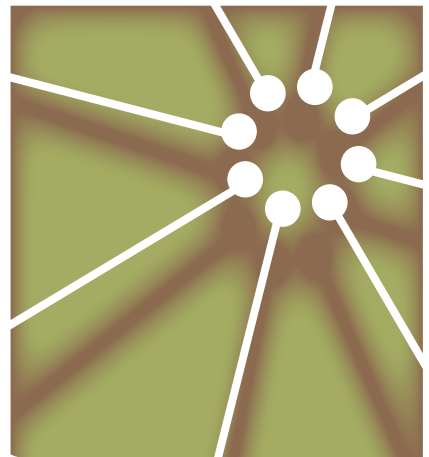# Sustaining State Policy Infrastructure for Impact on Poverty

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Executive Summary

Ideally, a robust infrastructure for impact on state policy would include a mix of well-connected, high-performing organizations that anchor and support a diverse ecosystem of partners using a range of strategies in order to advocate on structural issues that influence economic opportunity and poverty. Progressive policy infrastructure organizations pursue important end goals that benefit low-wealth communities and help them change the conditions that underlie poverty. Equally important, they bolster and leverage the efforts of other groups working to move people and places out of poverty.

The poor economy has exacerbated the struggles of low- and moderate-wealth people, depleting already limited resources and weakening the opportunity structures designed to help them. Likewise, state policy groups that advocate for those opportunity structures, such as affordable housing, public transit, and community development, find themselves facing tougher policy challenges with limited financial resources.

In the past, infrastructure groups working for progressive change had been able to work across the political aisle, engaging leaders of both parties in common cause for the benefit of children and working families, for example. Today's anti-tax, anti-government rhetoric, however, leaves little room for creative policy making or consensus building. Whether by design or default, this new political leadership, which has little experience governing, has been effective at dismantling state government in ways that will have long-term and far-reaching impact.

Some observers see the potential for a "new power" to emerge as an alternative to the extreme conservatism that thus far has captured voters' imagination with a particular narrative of how we got into the current crisis and how we will get out of it. Progressive policy infrastructure groups remain both realistic and hopeful in this environment, working

tirelessly to hold the line and defend past gains while tending to relationships, cultivating new coalitions, and positioning themselves to move progressive public policy when conditions allow.

No single organization could sufficiently constitute infrastructure for an entire state. In many Babcock-funded states, however, the one or two grantees interviewed for this study are the only infrastructure organizations working for progressive policy change. This picture makes survival of these infrastructure organizations critical; if they were to go away, so would what exists of their state's progressive policy infrastructure. At the same time, this picture points to a clear and urgent need to broaden and diversify the infrastructure so that it is a more solid and impactful presence in the states.

This report is a learning tool for the Babcock Foundation as it considers its future approach to supporting this work. The study suggests the following recommendations for funders:

1. **Exit when the progressive state policy infrastructure is secure.**
2. **Grow the funding pie.**
3. **Continue providing multi-year general operating support.**
4. **Invest in strategic capacities of infrastructure organizations.**
5. **Build a true infrastructure, not just organizations.**

The goal is stronger, more adaptable organizations forming a true, robust progressive policy infrastructure, supported by a broader and more diverse pool of funders. This infrastructure is both important enough and fragile enough to warrant sustained investment. Luckily, by its nature, the progressive state policy infrastructure will generate a high return on investment through its myriad efforts that help move people and places out of poverty.

Introduction

Among its multi-faceted and layered approach to helping to move people and places out of poverty, the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation has invested in state-level progressive policy infrastructure in the Southeastern U.S. "Infrastructure" actually refers to two related concepts:

1. Anchor organizations that play a cross-cutting, capacity building role in progressive policy advocacy at the state level.

2. The statewide web of policy advocacy groups that coordinate their efforts and collectively move progressive public policy through a mix of advocacy strategies, engage a broad spectrum of constituents and issues, and help shape the policy environment in which advocacy efforts occur.

Unlike other policy groups that may have a very focused set of issue concerns, such as student achievement or watershed protection, policy infrastructure groups advocate on **cross-cutting policy issues that inform and intersect with other policy issues.** Cross-cutting policy issues include:

- Budget and tax
- Voting and civil rights
- Community economic development
- Jobs and workforce development
- Child welfare
- Other issues like immigration, energy, health access, or education that, in a particular context and/or time, have implications across state policy efforts.

Like other policy groups, policy infrastructure organizations employ **a variety of advocacy strategies** including:

- Community organizing
- Voter engagement
- Legislative advocacy, including lobbying, as well as administrative advocacy
- Legal advocacy, including litigation
- Leadership development, including youth development
- Direct service explicitly linked to policy change
- Policy research and analysis
- Communications and media advocacy

What distinguishes the infrastructure groups from other policy advocates is that they not only make use of these strategies to advance their own agendas but also often work behind the scenes to **build the capacity of other organizations to advocate on their respective issues.** Policy infrastructure groups help leverage the advocacy capacity in their state by connecting advocacy groups to each other, organizing and resourcing coalitions, generating data that can be plugged into advocacy campaigns, and providing training and technical assistance to other groups. Thus, infrastructure organizations proactively help to weave the statewide policy infrastructure that has the power and capacity to effect progressive policy change over time.

One might ask how to justify investing in infrastructure when nonprofits serving basic needs are struggling to survive in the current economy. Rick Cohen of *The Nonprofit Quarterly* responds, "That's exactly why the infrastructure matters. When the infrastructure functions, it strengthens the sector, bolsters its advocacy, increases its accountability, and expands its reach and support of nonprofits…"

The progressive policy infrastructure is a critical, though often under-recognized, element of a robust nonprofit landscape that can have a positive impact on low-wealth people and places. For example, in Alabama, infrastructure groups like Greater Birmingham Ministries, Arise Citizens' Policy Project, Alabama Appleseed, and Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform work to reform the state's constitution, which is the largest and most complicated state governing document in the country.

In Alabama, changing the law requires amending the constitution, a much higher bar to pass than advocates in others states face. Thus, reforming the constitution could have far-reaching impact, empowering advocates working in every field of interest to improve people's lives. While pursuing the long-term goal of constitutional reform, these Alabama partners deploy smart strategy on timely issues that affect low-wealth communities, such as tax policy, immigration laws, and trasnportation policy.

Likewise, in Appalachia, infrastructure groups like the West Virginia Budget and Policy Center, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, and Kentucky Center for Economic Policy/Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED) advocate for progressive taxation and energy policy – not only to protect the environment but also to reform their states' budget structures, strengthen the social safety net, and expand economic opportunity. Gulf Coast groups like One Voice Louisiana and Mississippi Center for Justice address long-standing issues of racial and economic equity alongside disaster relief in order to improve the quality of life and strengthen the resilience of their communities.

In sum, progressive policy infrastructure organizations pursue important end goals that benefit low-wealth communities and help them change the conditions that underlie poverty. Equally important, they bolster and leverage the efforts of other groups working to move people and places out of poverty.

Study Purpose and Methodology

This report aims to be a learning tool for the Foundation as it seeks to hear from the experience of state policy players and consider its future approach to supporting this work. This report summarizes a broad scan of state policy infrastructure grantees in the Babcock Foundation's 11-state region. Further study would be needed for deep assessment of each organization or statewide infrastructure, including groups that are not Babcock grantees.

The report relied on the following data sources to inform its findings:

- Interviews with 15 grantees.
- Surveys responses from 36 grantees. This includes 14 of the 15 interviewees; thus, a total of 37 organizations participated in this study.
- A review of websites of national organizations that provide support to state policy infrastructure organizations.
- A review of 16 articles related to the topic, listed at the end of the report.

The response rates for surveys and interviews should not be overlooked: out of 50 invited grantees, 37 participated for a whopping 74% participation rate. This reflects not only a generosity among the foundation's grantees but also a true appreciation for the support and partnership of the Babcock Foundation. Several noted that the foundation was both an early and consistent funder for work that is not easy to resource, and they value the intentionality with which the foundation reflects upon its work and hones its efforts.

Context

State policy groups exist to *shape* the context in which they sit. And at the same time, they are *shaped* by that very context. The challenges of the current environment – politically, economically, and philanthropically – affect all nonprofits, and they have a unique impact on state policy infrastructure organizations.

Financial Context: Poor Economy, Limited Philanthropy

The poor economy has exacerbated the struggles of low- and moderate-wealth people, depleting already limited resources and weakening the opportunity structures designed to help them. Likewise, state policy groups that advocate for those opportunity

structures, such as affordable housing, public transit, and community development, find themselves facing tougher policy challenges with limited financial resources.
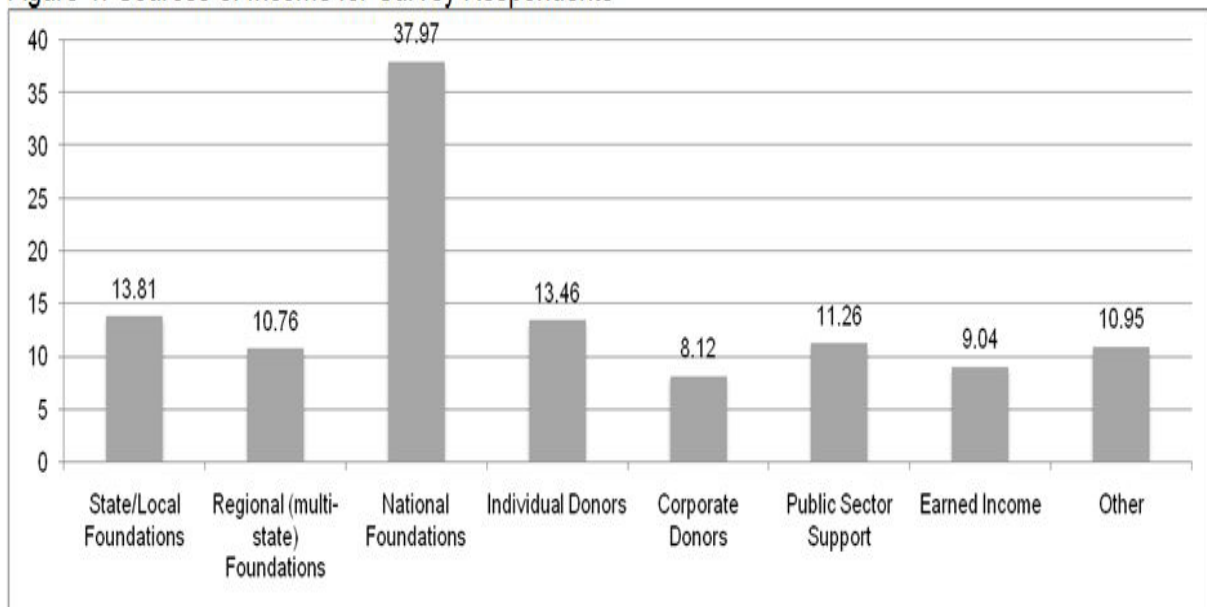
While all the groups in this study remain in operation, some report having to cut back on the number of issues they address as well as the depth of their work because of the economic constraints they are experiencing. In simple terms, resources are down, demand for services is up, and competition among nonprofits has increased. Federal devolution has continued to push more policy making and funding streams to the state and local levels. In the past, devolution opened new opportunities for state-based groups but increasingly closes doors in the face of the states' fiscal crisis. Some groups have been able to take advantage of opportunities such as federal stimulus or disaster relief dollars, but these examples are limited and pale in comparison to the challenges they are meant to address.

Philanthropically, the South lags behind other regions of the country in homegrown resources and national investments in our states. In-state funding for the progressive policy change work of the

groups of this study is especially constrained. One leader astutely notes, "We don't have a lot of state policy infrastructure because we don't have a state philanthropic infrastructure." Survey respondents affirm the importance of national funders, which dwarf all other sources of funding:

Certainly, the current economy poses challenges to these groups' ability to operate as well as plan for the future. But even as the economy improves, the nature of the work of state policy groups makes resource development a challenge. Both individual and institutional givers tend to support more straightforward and emotionally compelling service-based causes than seemingly distant notions of policy and systems change on abstract issues like budgetary reform. And, in the current political environment, grant seekers note, "Funders are scared of a relationship with a group that's perceived as liberal." Some groups have developed earned income streams, but these are limited, often simply redistributing philanthropic resources via other nonprofits that need specific help such as policy research. Thus, the market in which these groups raise resources seems finite, suggesting that any attempts at sustainability must include strategies that grow and ripen the philanthropic environment as much as strengthen the organizations operating within it.

Figure 1: Sources of Income for Survey Respondents

Political Context: Scorched Earth, "New Power"

Politics in the South has always been complicated. While viewed nationally as a conservative region, states within the region have diverse political cultures and traditions. Over the last four years, all of the states have become more conservative according to various measures, including but not limited to the party affiliation of elected officials. Alabama's 2011 immigration law is considered even more draconian than Arizona's, which was recently debated and ruled on by the U.S. Supreme Court. North Carolina, which historically has prided itself on being a "progressive Southern state," fell in line with its regional kin by passing a constitutional amendment in 2012 to ban gay marriage in the state. Southern states have kept pace with national trends in voter suppression efforts, including strict photo ID laws in Tennessee and Georgia.

A number of states are experiencing one-party rule coupled with elected leaders who are new to the political arena and steadfastly devoted to limited government and unregulated free market. Key informants in all of the Southern states in which the Babcock Foundation invests report that the tone and tenor of the political arena have shifted dramatically, making policy advocacy more contentious than ever before. In the past, infrastructure groups working for progressive change, such as progressive taxation, consumer protections, and voting rights, had been able to work across the political aisle, engaging leaders of both parties in common cause for the benefit of children and working families, for example. Today's anti-tax, anti-government rhetoric, however, leaves little room for creative policy making or consensus building.

Policy advocates report that the new elected leaders tend to be aggressive rather than moderate in their approach, often slashing social safety net programs, dismantling environmental and other government regulations, and refusing to raise and often reducing taxes on corporations and wealthy individuals.

At the same time, they also are advancing a conservative social agenda that mostly targets women's reproductive health; voting rights of people of color; the livelihood, free movement, and legal status of immigrants; and equality of LGBTQ residents. They can afford this scorched earth approach, in contrast to the typical "sausage making" that legislative processes are known for, because many are not interested in holding onto their elected positions for the long term. Their political ideology drives them to shrink the size and significance of government, not to become life-long public servants. One interviewee laments, "We've always competed against other nonprofits, now we are competing against [anti-government] ideology."

Whether by design or default, this new leadership, which has little experience governing, has been effective at dismantling state government in ways that will have long-term and far-reaching impact. "It's hard to build state government when your controlling ideology is there shouldn't be a government," observes one state policy leader. These elected leaders also challenge the efforts of state policy groups because they have little interest in state intervention on the issues that these groups advocate. "These 'tea party' people are more libertarian, they are not supportive of government at all," notes another interviewee. "They prefer government not to be involved in any aspect of the economy or community development. They are more ideological than practical. Government has always played a role setting policies that affect the economy. Without government playing a role, the economy will not be healed."

Though they have shown more discipline in advancing their agenda than many progressive advocates anticipated, the extremism of new leaders has evoked some backlash from elected officials and voters, which could create openings for progressive advocates. Some observers see the potential for a "new power" to emerge as an alternative to the extreme conservatism that thus far has captured voters' imagination with a particular narrative of how we got into the current crisis and how we will get out of it. Burt Lauderdale of Kentuckians for

the Commonwealth (KFTC) suggests that "either things are going to get more desperate and divided or we have an opportunity to turn a corner. The massiveness of the notion of turning a corner politically and economically is daunting, but there's such a degree of unrest and fervent that if we are able to articulate and organize toward a meaningful and substantive alternative, there's a lot of interest." The KFTC coalition has nearly quadrupled its membership base since 2005, generating a sense of energy and new ideas, but still has some ground to gain with 8,000 members in a state of 4 million.

To be sure, the region is dynamic, making political certainties impossible. New majorities comprised of people of color, immigrants, and transplants from the Northeast and Midwest create the opportunity for multi-racial organizing and new political narratives that could provide a model for the nation. Progressive policy infrastructure groups remain both realistic and hopeful in this environment, working tirelessly to hold the line and defend past gains while tending to relationships, cultivating new coalitions, and positioning themselves to move progressive public policy when conditions allow.

State Policy Infrastructure: Current and Ideal

Ideally, a robust *statewide policy infrastructure* would include a mix of well-connected, high-performing *infastructure organizations* that anchor and support a diverse ecosystem of partners using a range of strategies in order to advocate on structural issues like tax policy that influence economic opportunity and poverty. While individual infrastructure organizations can be multi-faceted – working on a range of issues and/or using a mix of strategies – no single organization could sufficiently constitute infrastructure for an entire state. In many Babcock-funded states, however, the one or two grantees interviewed for this study are the only infrastructure organizations working for progressive policy change. This mirrors national trends. In his follow-up to *The*

Nonprofit Quarterly special edition on nonprofit infrastructure, Rick Cohen asserts, "Funding has been heavily concentrated in a limited number of individual institutions rather than in a comprehensive distributed system of infrastructure."

This exposes an inherent weakness of progressive policy infrastructure, even as individual organizations might be strong. Any examination of progressive state policy infrastructure also must take into account the well-financed ecosystem of think tanks, media outlets, and lobbying machines that work in opposition to progressive systems change. This powerful ecosystem promotes a very different vision of the role of government and who it should serve, the causes of poverty and how to address it, whether equity should be expanded and to whom, and the value of opportunity structures and how to resource them.

Statewide Capacity

A state's policy infrastructure certainly relies on strong organizations, but there must be a critical mass of them addressing a portfolio of integrated issues and conducting a range of complementary activities that move and sustain policy changes. In their article for *Foundation Review*, Barbara Masters and Torie Osborn suggest that this infrastructure must include: "legislative and administrative advocacy expertise, legal advocates and litigation, communications and media advocacy (including framing and messaging), policy research and analysis. To be successful, this infrastructure, in combination with the grassroots and other core elements of the movement, must be able to connect local agendas through a region, take the local policy gains statewide and, ultimately, nationwide in an effort to bring community power to the seats of power."

Research for this study concurs, but would elevate community organizing and voter engagement as equally core elements of a robust, effective, and sustainable state policy infrastructure. Additionally, it would include a focus on budget and tax issues,

voting and civil rights, community economic development, jobs/workforce/education, child welfare, and other cross-cutting issues of concern in a particular state.

This study included a broad scan across the Babcock Foundation's 11-state funding region, and did not examine deeply each state's progressive policy infrastructure. It did not include non-grantees. In follow-up research and analysis, a chart like the following could help map the breadth and depth of the policy infrastructure in each state:

From this initial study, it appears that at least eight of the 11 states have very thin state policy infrastructure. Even the three better resourced states – Alabama, Mississippi, and North Carolina – have significant gaps in the infrastructure. Across the region, obvious gaps exist in non-partisan voter engagement, litigation, and organizations that intentionally link direct service to policy advocacy. While a number of organizations listed "communications" as one of their top three strategies, this also emerged as a primary area for capacity building.

Policy Focus Examples

Strategy/Activity	Budget & Tax	Voting & Civil Rights	Community Economic Development	Jobs, Workforce, Education	Child and Family Welfare	Specific Issues – Immigration, Energy, Health Access, Education, etc.
Community Organizing						
Voter Engagement						
Legislative and Administrative Advocacy						
Litigation						
Leadership Development						
Direct Service Linked to Policy Advocacy						
Policy Research and Analysis						
Communications and Media Advocacy						

However, the actual strength of each state's progressive policy infrastructure is more complicated to measure than simply checking boxes in a chart. A thorough examination would include an assessment of:

- The depth and quality of the work.
- How dispersed and connected it is, both to the usual partners and unusual allies.
- How it compares to the work of state policy groups and others representing opposing interests.

This picture makes survival of these infrastructure organizations critical; if they were to go away, so would what exists of their state's progressive policy infrastructure. At the same time, this picture points to a clear and urgent need to broaden and diversify the infrastructure so that it is a more solid and impactful presence in the states.

Organizational Capacity

In the California Endowment's "What Makes an Effective Advocacy Organization," TCC Group notes, "Strong organizational capacity has the potential to be a reliable predictor of successful advocacy outcomes and can thereby assuage the

concerns of funders (and board members) that general support funding is being well spent."

While this study did not systematically measure survey and interview participants against TCC's model, Babcock grantees appear to have relatively strong and stable organizational capacity, at least in comparison to other nonprofits. Through the survey, only seven respondents indicated that their organizations have experienced significant shrinkage over the last five years. In those cases, downsizing occurred when funders reduced their funding due to the economic downturn or specific grants came to a predictable end. In some cases, these organizations chose to cut organizational budgets by not filling vacant positions. No one reported mass layoffs or programmatic shut-downs.

The following describes three core capacities exhibited by the strong state policy organizations in this study.

1. Engaging the Base and Power Brokers

A number of interviewees agree that the single most important predictor of impact is "authentic accountability to a base of constituents." A "base" can include but also transcends members and supporters, encompassing the people that are most directly affected by the policies that state policy groups engage and that have either direct or indirect opportunities to influence the groups' work.

Some of the groups with the most strong and reliable base are those with a service mission alongside their policy work and voter engagement. A group's strength can be measured by its ability to mobilize its base around specific policy debates or campaigns. A large or broad base can be very compelling to elected officials, especially when their constituents overlap with a group's base.

For example, the Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama (LIHCA) advocates for state housing policy that increases housing opportunities for people in Alabama. The organization is really a network of affordable housing organizations and service providers from across the state. LIHCA partnered with the Center for Community Change and ARISE to win enabling legislation for a State Housing Trust Fund in 2012. Greater Birmingham Ministries and Alabama Asset Building Coalition also work collaboratively with LIHCA.

Equally important is a group's relationship to so-called "power brokers," those policy makers that have clout because of their role or longevity. These relationships can determine credibility and effectiveness at the legislature. Grantees report that the strongest groups are those that link base building and relationships with policy makers, either by blending various strategies inside the organization or by strategically partnering with groups with complementary focuses. "Organizations that do policy work and also have organized membership committees of people directly affected by issues are most impactful," explains Megan Macaraeg of the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition.

2. Adapting and Collaborating for Impact

Given the long-term nature of the change they seek, state policy groups have to take the long view on their goals and outcomes. State policy leaders who participated in this study describe holding a broad set of goals about how to build power as essential for effecting change. These goals include but go beyond campaign wins. Success must be measured not only on the basis of legislative change but also in terms of engaging and empowering people most affected by policy decisions.

Savvy advocates maintain their principles while also "meeting elected officials where they are, not where we want them to be." While they might hold an ambitious vision of social change, they also adapt to what's politically possible and do not forsake the good for the perfect. Often their issues form a constellation that must be managed as a whole. "Because we work on a range of issues, how we pursue a policy on a particular issue affects our

ability to work on and build allies in other issues," one leader observes. Another describes a situation where the group considered proposing a tax rate increase but decided to back off that recommendation and focus on other issues; they felt that the tax fight would have closed minds and prevented anything else from moving forward. They ended up winning on the other issues. "We had a seat at the table. We were listened to," asserts this interviewee.

So political adapting must take place, while the base keeps an organization accountable to its larger values and goals. Still, trying to find the "sweet spot" between purity and pragmatism can be challenging: "We are 'left' in terms of getting on the advocacy limb, but in the organizing world we are actually conservative," one advocate acknowledges.

Bernie Mazyck of the South Carolina Association of Community Development Corporations describes two approaches to policy work, what he calls "shaking and baking." These are complementary and equally necessary forces for progressive policy change: "The 'shaking' approach is in your face, more aggressive, almost antagonistic. Successful shakers are often charismatic individuals who are confrontational and direct. They have been out front on issues like predatory lending and foreclosures. And then you have 'bakers,' like our organization, who work more quietly and strategically to find policy makers that have clout and are respected by both parties. We court them, educate them, bring them to our meetings, cultivate the relationship and, over time, they convince their colleagues to come over to our side."

State policy groups commit to a vision that is larger than their own organizational interest or agenda. They recognize the necessity of collaborating with others that have complementary skills and relationships. Within networks and coalitions, they play well together. Their harshest critique often is directed at so-called partners that "go off script or go rogue on us" because they cannot subordinate their organizations or their egos in service to something larger than themselves.

The economic and political constraints currently facing progressive policy groups undoubtedly spark competitive impulses and challenge efforts to collaborate; but these leaders know that strategic thinking is especially crucial in this type of environment, and strategic thinking requires collaboration. They report having each other's backs at the legislature and with the media, developing a shared analysis about change, strategizing together, and investing in networks and coalitions in order to expand their reach and impact.

For example, Arkansas Public Policy Panel and Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families move fluidly between and among a number of issue-based coalitions. These coalitions are comprised of service providers, unions, faith-based organizations, immigrant groups, municipal associations, education advocates, and LGBT rights organizations. These coalitions have been successful in achieving significant policy wins in the state in education, tax reform, minimum wages, and immigration.

State-level infrastructure organizations also have started forming inter-state alliances to connect on issues that cross state boundaries, such as environmental regulation or immigration. Three regional networks emerged through this research:

- **Alliance for Appalachia** – This network of Central Appalachian groups formed to end mountaintop removal mining and advance a just and sustainable Appalachia. The Alliance provides training for members, enables joint strategizing, and organizes members to engage in national-level advocacy.

- **Four-State Savings Partnership** – This learning collaborative focuses on increasing savings for low-income people in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. One member says, "Our states share a history of poverty and inequities that result in the racial wealth gap we have today, in addition to other obstacles to economic security for low-income people." Members have mapped

services and gaps in their states and directed resources to fill the gaps. Recognizing that financial institutions often work across state lines, the collaborative has outlined policy initiatives that "hold promise for lifting people up the economic ladder." Examples include strategies to promote the Earned Income Tax Credit, matched savings, and college savings.

- **Southeast Immigrant Rights Network** – Co-created by the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, this regional network is now emerging as a stand-alone entity. Through monthly calls and an annual conference, the Network creates opportunities for peer learning and support across states.

3. Leading with Mission

Systems change, especially to move people and places out of poverty, requires perseverance and courage. As one leader notes, "There are organizations that could have more impact if they weren't so afraid of losing what they have." Successful organizations don't build capacity in order to avoid facing risks, but so they can take principled and strategic risks to advance their mission.

Achieving impact requires funding. Indeed, policy groups working on the opposite side remain flush with financial resources regardless of the economy thanks to steadfast donors and corporate interests with deep pockets. Thus, fundraising capacity must be in place for the progressive infrastructure groups to survive, let alone compete. Those that have been successful at resourcing their efforts report that sequencing matters – i.e., that fundraising must *follow* programming, not the other way around. One interviewee matter-of-factly notes, "Funding follows what our programming is. New interests open up new doors. And sometimes funders depart."

This approach assures that a group is being strategic and not just chasing dollars. It also enables a group to focus its fundraising efforts on those funders

who are likely to support the group's priorities. These groups often are engaged in work that could be considered controversial, even threatening, to some funders. By determining advocacy and programmatic priorities first and then seeking funding for them, the groups circumvent the potential for funders to dictate the group's work or ask that they tone it down to be more politically palatable. "Those that support us do it because they know we will step up on controversial issues," says the Mississippi Center for Justice's Martha Bergmark. Alan Essig of the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute concurs, "Our core funders expect us to get involved in the work we do – they fund us to challenge the status quo."

Respondents assert that the most important indicator of an organization's success in fundraising is its ability to achieve results that matter. But at the same time, they recognize that only strong, well-resourced organizations are likely to achieve those results. So, results point to organizational strengths that then attract resources; and likewise, resources strengthen an organization so it can achieve ambitious results.

Successful organizations are, on one hand, focused. On the other hand, they are diversified enough in issues and strategies both to succeed on their agenda and also to attract a diverse range of supporters. Its good when "we're able to fit a few different boxes," says one interviewee.

State policy groups acknowledge one other factor in fundraising success: having the staff capacity to focus on fundraising. While the executive directors continue to play a primary role with fundraising, particularly with large individual and institutional donors, additional staff focused on fundraising can help increase the group's visibility with prospective funders.

Support for State Policy Infrastructure

Given the fragility of the progressive state policy infrastructure, these groups have proactively and strategically expanded their limited capacity by tapping into national networks and technical assistance providers, sometimes helping to create and resource the national partners. One state policy advocate refers to these groups as "force multipliers." They fall into two major categories:

- National **networks** that mirror the policy focus of infrastructure organizations, provide technical expertise on policy issues and/or systems change strategies, and connect like groups across states.

- National r**esource partners** that provide tools and technical assistance on related content issues, like racial equity or technology.

The following sections highlight the work of the groups most commonly mentioned as critical sources of support to progressive policy infrastructure organizations working at the state level. A catalog of these groups can be found in the Appendix.

National Policy Networks

The infrastructure groups look to a patchwork of national network organizations to provide the support they need through technical assistance, peer-to-peer networking, training, and in some cases, funding. Sometimes, the national entity preceded the state work and, in fact, played a role in developing state-level capacity across the country. In other cases, the national network emerged in response to demand from state-level work that had reached a tipping point. Regardless of who created whom, this national-state ecosystem helps to strengthen state policy groups and creates the potential for taking their work to scale nationally.

Though their collective resources pale in comparison to the highly funded conservative infrastructure, they do help to counter that presence and narrative. Without them, conservative policy solutions that center around limited government would completely capture the public discourse as well as political debate.

Most importantly, these national policy networks help statewide and community groups understand and become engaged on complicated but highly consequential policy issues, such as the state budget. They strategically connect the dots between these cross-cutting infrastructure issues and causes that move people, such as children's health. This enables more people and organizations to get involved on policy issues, thus expanding our democracy.

Babcock grantees that participated in this study most commonly reference two organizations – the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative and the Economic Analysis Research Network – as their go-to resources on policy infrastructure issues:

- **State Fiscal Analysis Initiative (SFAI)** – A project of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, SFAI has helped launch a budget and tax entity in nearly every state, either as a stand-alone organization or embedded within a larger infrastructure organization, such as a statewide association of nonprofits. Many grantees describe SFAI as "essential" to their tax and budget analysis and communications, which often underlies other work such as child advocacy, immigrant rights, or energy policy. Members tap SFAI for technical assistance on communications and messaging, coalition development, website and graphics design. They also tap each other not only for content expertise and campaign tips, but also for help with the basics of nonprofit management. SFAI also has channeled financial resources to member organizations. "We raise over half of our budget through participation in the SFAI network," reports one member.

- **Economic Analysis Research Network (EARN)** – Through its listserve and annual conference, this group exposes members to state-level policies related to economic security and equity. One member explains, "One of the most valuable resources that we get from this network is access to historical data and the ability to disaggregate data by race and gender on a range of indicators that are particularly useful for framing policy debates."

A handful of other organizations listed below also received mention, albeit by fewer respondents, as critical supports to the progressive state policy infrastructure groups:

- **Center for Enterprise Development (CFED)** – This group provides technical assistance for asset building efforts. Through this network, members get to "lend support as practitioners for national policy initiatives that will help, or work against those that hurt, low-income people in our state." One member describes being able to research and develop a "matched savings program for youth aging out of the foster care system" because of participation in CFED.

- **NeighborWorks America** – This group provides direct grants for capacity building and grassroots leadership development. The national training institute attracts 2,000 trainers, community development experts, and practitioners from throughout the country to build skills of infrastructure groups and their members.

- **Pushback Network** – This group provides technical assistance related to voter engagement, from the basics of voter registration to non-partisan, issue-based get-out-the-vote strategies. One grantee describes the organization as "providing modern civic tools [that] connect issues and communities to transform the relationship of people to self-governance from passive, alienated consumers to active, connected producers."

- **Working Poor Families Project** – In addition to a national conference and policy academy, this group provides significant data to support members' policy work. It also provides some financial support to infrastructure groups working on education and public benefits policy issues affecting low-income families. Members describe this network as a space for "idea generation and sharing best practices."

National Resource Partners

The state policy organizations tap a number of organizations on a range of topics related to organizational management and sustainability. Additionally, they regularly access at least six national resource organizations for technical assistance and tools specifically related to their policy infrastructure efforts:

- **Applied Research Center** and **Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity** – These national organizations provide thought leadership, models, and tools on racial equity.

- **Center for Community Change** – This flagship progressive organization provides training and tools on community organizing, leadership development, messaging, and specific issues such as housing trust funds.

- **Community Catalyst** – This national voice on health care access and reform provides not only technical assistance, but also data and messaging that can be integrated into state campaigns.

- **Community Media Organizing Project** – In addition to trainings on communications and message development, CMOP provides members with an annual funding allowance for use in technical assistance, communications, and media outreach planning. One member describes this resource as "good at equipping ordinary folk with the tools and training to lift their own voices through local media."

- **Progressive Technology Project** – As one grantee describes, PTP "equips us with organizing-centered best practices in using technology tools such as databases for organizing and enhancing communications that best serves organizing through social media." Another participant notes that PTP builds capacity especially needed to reach youth constituents.

Trends for Sustainability

> *Movements ebb and flow. According to American historian John D'Emilio, "change come(s) in the form of alternating cycles of what we might colloquially call leaping and creeping. During the "creeping" times, the infrastructure, organizations, relationships, and leaders of a movement are built so that during the great "leaping" times – those so-called "movement moments"– public engagement, attitudes, and policies rapidly move forward. How well the infrastructure for the movement is built determines how high the leap will be when the ripe time comes.*
>
> **~ Barbara Masters and Torie Osborn,**
> **The Foundation Review**

The infrastructure can be easy to overlook because it naturally operates in the background. But its strength can determine the success of systems change efforts by nonprofits working across issues and throughout a state. The following themes and trends affect the state policy infrastructure's ability to become sustainable, thus further resourcing and sustaining other progressive advocacy groups.

The Challenge of Resourcing Controversial Work

The Babcock Foundation was mentioned far and away most frequently by survey respondents as the foundation that supports their policy work most consistently. At 17 mentions, it was named more than twice as often as the next highest responses, the Marguerite Casey Foundation, Ford Foundation, and W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The C.S. Mott Foundation and Annie E. Casey Foundation also received mentions, as did a number of in-state funders.

But overall, the funding pool for this work is limited. Policy work is hard to understand and measure, and it seldom produces quick results. Policy results often take a long time to reveal themselves, and they are notoriously hard to measure and communicate. "It's harder to fund policy, it's harder to see results. When there are results, we try to articulate them," says one leader.

Few funders have patience for the kind of incremental change required to get large-scale impact on lots of people. Also, the particular nature of the policy work of these infrastructure groups can be controversial and off-putting for foundations. Though some grantees believe there is an "inverse relationship – the more controversial the struggle, the easier it is to get national or regional funding and the harder it is to get local or state funding," this study reveals the challenges of raising resources and support from any level.

Traditional power dynamics between funders and grantees also thwart progress. "It seems like foundations talk to foundations about strategy, and organizations talk to organizations about strategy," one leader reflects. "But together, we revert to the typical transactional dynamic."

These groups report that the work they do on tax and budget issues positions them as controversial. Often, this work and the positions the groups take–to bolster or expand the social safety net, to

raise revenues to support it through taxes, and to create a more progressive tax structure – are opposed by the corporations and wealthy individuals that support and lead local and state foundations. An Appalachian group reports, "If we were to play it safe and just focused on children's issues and never talked about coal, we would be financially better off and maybe more influential. But it's such a big issue, and a huge part of our state's economy and tax base. I don't know how you ignore it. There's no way to raise resources to support children and families unless we look at coal. That's where most of the wealth is. We are one of the poorest states. You have to go where the income is to fund those things." Groups working on immigration or community economic development note the tenuous alliance with the banking sector, which might not be with them if the groups turn their attention to budget and tax issues.

The interviewees note that individual donors who are willing and eager to fund controversial work tend to direct their dollars to political campaigns rather than nonprofit work; the state policy groups have not yet figured out how to tap into that funding stream.

National funders often focus their investment on political swing states, thus activities like non-partisan voter engagement remain under-resourced in most of the region. Some groups report that national funders also have become more cautious, asking them to remove references to community organizing from grant reports, for example. One spoke about a national funding opportunity on workforce development and training that fell through when the group's focus on workers, rather than employers, proved too controversial for the funder. When national funders do support the work, they might not do it in a way that is most helpful. "We have a number of funders who are interested in specific issues, but not in the place-based community organizing that is the heart of our work," laments one state leader. Grantees also report that when national funders do support organizing, they tend to impose models that work in more urbanized

communities of the Northeast and Midwest and don't understand the different culture of the South.

Growing Coalitions to Support Each Other

This study revealed how much the state policy groups value working in coalition. They often attempt to fill the gaps in their state's infrastructure through strategic alliances and partnerships with other groups. "Part of our strategy is to build social change infrastructure across the state," says Bill Kopsky of the Arkansas Public Policy Panel. "Our business model absolutely depends on leveraging the resources of networks and partnerships," adds Martha Bergmark of the Mississippi Center for Justice. This also allows them to take their work to a more controversial edge than they could alone, by providing strength in numbers but also by leveraging various strengths, such as legislative work and grassroots base building, for maximum impact.

The interview protocol inquired into how state policy groups balance the need to resource their own organizations with building the resources and capacity of their collaborators. Universally, these groups assert that they must have allies in order to win on their policy priorities. While they acknowledge competition for resources *between states*, collaboration of some sort appears to be the norm *within* states. They provided countless examples of introducing their peers to funders, even forsaking particular grant opportunities in order to direct those resources to other groups.

In some cases, the state policy groups interviewed literally serve as a resource provider to other groups – for example, Bernie Mazyck of the South Carolina Association of CDCs says, "The reason we exist is to ensure our members' sustainability. The best case is a win-win for both our members and our organization. But when we have to make a decision, we err on the side of our members." Kimble Forrister of Arise Citizens' Policy Project in

Alabama adds, "Since we are a coalition, our strength depends on the organizational health of our member groups." Infrastructure groups look for opportunities where they can reap some financial benefit for brokering relationships, while also channeling significant dollars to their members, who in turn support the infrastructure group.

Other groups have developed earned revenue streams for their organizations by providing technical assistance to other nonprofits. The most commonly named capacity is policy research and analysis, which few nonprofits can develop cost-efficiently in-house. "Our role is to make sure these groups have the intellectual horsepower to articulate their positions," explains Ted Boettner of the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy. "We stay away from politics and focus on policy."

"I can honestly say we have always chosen networks first," asserts Scott Douglas of Greater Birmingham Ministries. His group has helped to build 30 organizations to fill needed social services; about 50% of them have survived. As described above, several groups have joined with others to create and staff in-state or regional coalitions to complement and connect their efforts. "We have become one of the larger and better resourced organizations in the state and have an obligation to be a technical assistance and staffing resource for some of the smaller organizations in the state," explains Melinda Lawrence of the North Carolina Justice Center.

Smart on Policy, Struggles with Race and Leadership

We expect the state policy groups to be smart about public policy. But their savvy and courage exceed their capacity. They have been able to link their tax work, which is often controversial, to social services and children's issues that garner more ready support. They have been able to connect the dots to reveal, for example, the critical role that sheriffs play in Louisiana – "They have the most power to enforce the law in the local jurisdictions. They

don't even strive for higher office because they have all the power they need," notes Ashley Shelton of One Voice Louisiana. State policy groups have taken on the coal industry in Appalachia and immigration in Alabama and Tennessee.

Several interviewees report taking a stand against constitutional amendments and other initiatives to restrict gay rights, while those that focus on budget and tax issues note feeling challenged by where to locate LGBTQ work within their current policy frameworks.

A recurring theme among progressive policy infrastructure groups is their role in building public support and engagement for progressive policy change. Greater Birmingham Ministries, for example, describes its public transit efforts as "building 'publics' for public transportation. If there's a low 'public,' we build a 'public,'" explains executive director Scott Douglas. "We just don't give up hope on things that help people. [In its current form] public transportation is a barrier to wealth access for thousands of people."

Racism continues to intersect with infrastructure work – both in terms of the policy issues these groups pursue and in the relationships that take place among policy-oriented nonprofits. Grantees point out that redistricting and efforts to suppress minority voters will result in decreased power for communities of color on multiple levels, in part through a decline in lawmakers of color and support for institutions that are led by and/or serve communities of color. Infrastructure groups in Appalachia and states with low minority populations struggle to talk about race in meaningful ways, though they share a general concern about fairness and justice and recognize that race is used as a wedge issue to divide and conquer progressive coalitions even in majority white communities.

Interviewees of all racial identities acknowledge that, as tough as it is for any of them to raise resources, leaders of color as well as groups led by people of color face additional challenges in securing large and long-term support for their work.

They note that the investment in African American policy capacity, in particular, has not been made at the needed level and that there are few pathways for people of color to ascend to leadership within their states or nationally. Meanwhile, white-led organizations or groups that operate with "white values and culture" tend to get bigger, faster.

Finally, state policy groups struggle to build leadership capacity that will sustain the organization over the long term and through the tenures of specific individual leaders. Astute Executives understand it's no compliment for the organizations they built to struggle without them, or for the community to lose a valuable resource due to an organizational change. For Example, Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama's Isabel Rubio reflects, "[Our work] should end when the community no longer needs it, not because we didn't build a strong organization."

With inherently lean staffs, a few organizations have invested in new staff positions to both support the executive director and develop the skills and relationships to possibly assume the top job. Other groups have paid attention to distributing leadership across the staff and also creating leadership pathways for talented staff. Leaders report a recurring challenge is holding onto talented young people who get trained by the organization but are wooed away by government or bigger nonprofits that can pay higher salaries. In this way, these lean groups end up building the capacity of other organizations and the sector, while not always reaping direct and immediate benefits themselves.

Recommendations to the Foundation

This study sought to address a question that the Babcock staff holds, "When can the Babcock Foundation responsibly exit a funding relationship without doing harm so we can support other things?" With Babcock Foundation support for several state

policy groups exceeding a decade, the foundation was asking the perpetual funding question about balance between continuing investment in long-term grantees and supporting promising new work. Of course, exit is possible if the foundation's funding priorities shift, and it is always a possibility with specific grantees that are not effective. But a strategic and responsible exit revolves around the following steps.

1. **Exit when the progressive state policy infrastructure is secure.** As this study reveals, the progressive state policy infrastructure is fragile – there are too few groups and they are under-resourced in comparison to their opposition. Exit by one of the most reliable and trusted funding partners could, in the current context, be devastating to both individual organizations and to the statewide work that they lead and support. To avoid this type of disruption, any future exit strategy should be built around an *investment* strategy that helps to strengthen existing organizations and expand the statewide policy infrastructure so that it is more diversified and connected.

   This type of strategy involves the following inter-related recommendations.

2. **Grow the funding pie.** The Babcock Foundation already holds a goal around influence to leverage more resources for work in the region. Your grantees understand that your resources are limited, and they suggest that growing the pie would be mutually beneficial: "It's hard for all of us to compete for the same limited dollars. [Babcock] can't do it all, but they can help us make connections to other funders and increase the pot of money." Babcock's reputation as a strategic grantmaker and a respectful partner helps to position you to expand the funding pool for this work in two ways. First, it enables you to educate your funding peers, in the region and nationally, with real and compelling information about the importance of funding state policy infra-

structure, particularly in the South, and how to do it thoughtfully. Second, it enables you to connect in-state infrastructure groups directly with prospective funding partners, breaking both isolation and traditional power dynamics. Progress on this recommendation is necessary in order to address the remaining three recommendations.

3. **Continue providing multi-year general operating support**. This simple, straightforward approach still stands out as rare among the foundation's peers. *The Nonprofit Quarterly* special edition on nonprofit infrastructure suggests that these groups face unique challenges in securing long-term, unrestricted funding. It could not be more appreciated by grantees. Symbolically, it shows them you trust them. More practically, it allows them to be nimble and opportunistic as the policy environment evolves. It also helps to stabilize them within their unique context, and gives them the flexibility to build their capacity, which in turn enables them to make good use of operating support.

4. **Invest in strategic capacities of infrastructure organizations.** The Colorado Trust's recent research report, "Advocacy & Public Policy Grantmaking: Matching Process to Purpose," emphasizes the importance of building "adaptive capacity" – the ability to understand how the environment is shifting and adapt accordingly. In this study with Babcock Foundation state policy partners, the groups report that they most need help with organization development and communications, specifically:

• Keeping current and robust their ability to analyze and frame issues and communicate with diverse audiences.

• Modernizing their technology systems.

• Telling their story effectively – About a third of survey respondents report using logic models or other formal processes to plan and assess their efforts. And even those groups ask for support in telling their story to a broad range of stakeholders including prospective funders, policy makers across the political spectrum, potential partner organizations, and the people and communities they are trying to organize and serve.

• Investing in their own staff and board development, and preparing for the future by strengthening leadership throughout the organization and developing succession plans.

• Accessing culturally competent capacity building that sharpens their racial analysis and ability to integrate racial equity into their policy efforts. Groups that are led by people of color need to have their capacity respected and built, while white-led groups need help understanding how to be good allies, even when the demographics of their state remain predominately white.

• Developing financial models that are truly sustainable. Our study participants echo *The Nonprofit Quarterly* conclusion, "Funders increasingly pressure infrastructure groups to become more sustainable by engaging in earned-income activities without acknowledging the extent to which this may limit access and responsiveness."

5. **Build a true statewide infrastructure, not just organizations.** Strategize with partners in each state to assess and fill the gaps in progressive policy infrastructure. This could involve seeding new organizations or leveraging existing ones to round out the mix of issue areas and activities that a robust state policy infrastructure requires.

Also help these groups connect with each other in-state, as the infrastructure needs to be both diverse and distributed, on one hand, but also

connected so that synergies may arise. Equally important, help connect the groups to national networks and resource providers, and where appropriate, provide support directly to those networks to be re-distributed to state policy groups.

The goal would be stronger, more adaptable organizations that form robust progressive state policy infrastructure, supported by a broader and more diverse pool of funders. By its nature, the progressive state policy infrastructure will generate a high return on investment through its myriad efforts that help move people and places out of poverty.

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Appendix A: Catalog of Network and Resource Organizations

Appleseed

www.appleseednetwork.org

Appleseed is a nonprofit network of public interest justice centers. The network promotes evidence-based advocacy to secure lasting systemic change by ensuring that government advances the public interest, corporations treat consumers fairly, and all can exercise rights and enjoy real opportunities. Appleseed and its network of centers identifies barriers to opportunities and justice, makes policy and program recommendations, and leverages pro bono help.

Appleseed Centers operate in four states within Babcock's funding region – Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and South Carolina.

The Alliance for Appalachia

www.theallianceforappalachia.org

The Alliance seeks to end a devastating form of coal mining called mountaintop removal coal mining, put a halt to destructive coal technologies, and create a sustainable, just Appalachia. Members believe that the campaign to abolish mountaintop removal mining can be an important element of the national effort for progressive, systemic change in our nation's energy, economic, and environmental policies. By highlighting the dangers and true costs of our dependence on coal, the Alliance hopes to help move the nation away from our current extraction economy and toward a new ethic of conservation, efficiency and renewable energy. Members operate in four states within Babcock's funding region – Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Applied Research Center (ARC)

www.arc.org

ARC is a racial justice think tank and home for media and activism. ARC popularizes the need for racial justice and prepares people to fight for it by telling the stories of everyday people. ARC publishes the online magazine Color Lines and conducts research and policy analysis.

Center for Community Change

www.communitychange.org

The mission of the Center for Community Change is to build the power and capacity of low-income people, especially low-income people of color, to have a significant impact in improving their communities and the policies and institutions that affect their lives. The Center believes that vibrant community-based organizations, led by the people most affected by social and economic injustice, are key to putting an end to the failed "on your own" mentality of the right and building a new politics based on community values. Founded in 1968 to honor the life and values of Robert F. Kennedy, the Center is one of the longest-standing champions for low-income people and communities of color. The Center supports community-based organizations, unites grassroots groups on campaigns, delivers messages to DC, develops leadership, and provides training and technical assistance on organizing efforts.

Community Catalyst
www.communitycatalyst.org

Community Catalyst is a national nonprofit advocacy organization working to build the consumer and community leadership that is required to transform the American health system so it serves everyone – especially vulnerable members of society. Through research, technical assistance, fundraising and re-granting, policy analysis, and national campaigns, Community Catalyst has helped organizations in over 40 states achieve wide-reaching reforms in many areas including Medicaid policy, prescription drug prices, and diversity in the health care workforce. Community Catalyst has some presence in all of the states in which Babcock funds; however, there is no identified partner in Arkansas.

Community Media Organizing Project (CMOP)
http://www.progressivecommunicators.net/en/groups/community-media-organizing-project

A subsidiary of the Progressive Communicators Network, which in turn is a project of the Massachusetts-based Spirit in Action, CMOP advance the use of media to support and improve the art of community organizing in the South and aid the building of a movement for social change in the region. Current CMOP members operate in five states within Babcock's funding region:

- Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama
- Greater Birmingham Ministries in Alabama
- 9-5 Atlanta Working Women in Georgia
- Community Farm Alliance in Kentucky
- Kentuckians for the Commonwealth
- Families & Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children
- Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment (SOCM) in Tennessee

Corporation for Economic Development (CFED)
www.cfed.org

CFED aims to achieve state policy changes that improve economic security for low-income families and communities, build and protect the wealth of low- and moderate-income Americans at meaningful scale, and offer the field a platform on which to launch policy advocacy, product innovation and coalition development. CFED's state policy agenda focuses on five main issue areas: Financial Assets & Income, Business & Jobs, Housing & Homeownership, Education, and Healthcare. CFED has some presence on child asset building in Arkansas and North Carolina.

Economic Analysis and Research Network (EARN)
www.earncentral.org

Coordinated by the Economic Policy Institute, EARN encompasses 57 multi-issue research, policy, and advocacy organizations in 43 states. EARN's mission is to improve the lives of Americans through state and local policy, and change the nature of the national policy debate – state by state. EARN seeks to advance progressive policy at the state and regional level, to deliver important national messages, and to use the collective capacity of its organizations to develop new ideas and strategies.

The following EARN members operate in nine states within Babcock's funding region:

- Arise Citizens' Policy Project (Alabama)
- Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
- Southern Good Faith Fund Public Policy Program (Arkansas)
- Georgia Budget and Policy Institute
- Kentucky Youth Advocates
- Kentucky Center for Economic Policy
- Louisiana Budget Project
- Mississippi Economic Policy Center
- North Carolina Justice Center
- The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis (Virginia)
- West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy

No EARN members exist in Tennessee or South Carolina.

Four State Savings Partnership
No website

The Four State Savings Partnership is a collaboration to foster and promote savings programs for low-wealth individuals, families and communities, and also to promote and encourage automatic savings with employers in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Kirwan Institute Study of Race and Ethnicity
http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu

Based at The Ohio State University, the Kirwan Institute develops applied research and practical tools to address racialized marginalization and advance opportunity. Through its Opportunity Communities program, Kirwan maps "opportunity structures" within specific geographic communities and provides policy recommendations on topics like community development, fair housing, social justice, access to schools, jobs, health care, etc. Kirwan has supported work in several Babcock states, including Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations (NACEDA)
http://www.naceda.org

NACEDA is a national alliance of community development associations. Member organizations in 25 states and several metropolitan regions work closely with their membership to help shape state and local policy. NACEDA connects the local to the national and has advanced discussions with key federal policymakers regarding funding for CDCs, such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit and HUD's Neighborhood Stabilization Program. NACEDA facilitates and runs peer-learning and networking programs that boost the capacity of members to serve their CDC constituents.

Community development associations that participate in NACEDA operate in seven states within Babcock's funding region – Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB)
nalcab.org

NALCAB was founded in 2002 by a group of community and economic development leaders representing rural and urban Latino communities gathered to identify their most fundamental challenge: in order to build assets and wealth, community development organizations that serve Latino communities need greater access to capital and technical resources. NALCAB held its' first national conference in 2003 entitled "Accessing Capital to Create Wealth" in Albuquerque, New Mexico and successfully engaged a national cross section of Latino-led nonprofits and investors. In the years that followed, NALCAB expanded its audience through a series of events and developed an increasingly national membership base, representative of both urban and rural communities. In 2010, NALCAB launched a communities collaborative in the Deep South. NALCAB has members operating in six states within Babcock's funding region – Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC)
nlihc.org

The National Low Income Housing Coalition is dedicated to achieving socially just public policy that assures people with the lowest incomes in the United States have affordable and decent homes. Founded in 1974, NLIHC educates, organizes, and advocates to ensure decent, affordable housing within healthy neighborhoods for everyone. Goals include preserving existing federally assisted homes and housing resources, expanding the supply of low-income housing, and establishing housing stability as the primary purpose of federal low income housing policy.

NLIHC has state coalition partners in eight states within Babcock's funding region:

• Alabama Arise
• Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama
• Housing Arkansas
• Georgia State Trade Association of Nonprofit Developers
• Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky
• Louisiana Housing Alliance
• North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness
• North Carolina Housing Coalition
• Affordable Housing Coalition of South Carolina
• Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness
• Virginia Housing Coalition

No NLIHC partners operate in Mississippi, Tennessee, or West Virginia.

NeighborWorks America
www.nw.org

NeighborWorks America creates opportunities for people to live in affordable homes, improve their lives and strengthen their communities. The national NeighborWorks network includes 235 community-based groups serving more than 4,500 communities nationwide, including a string presence in rural communities. NeighborWorks provides grants, programmatic support, training and technical assistance to its national network.

NeighborWorks members operate in every state of Babcock's funding region:

Alabama
- Community Action Partnership of North Alabama, Inc.
- Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc.
- Neighborhood Housing Services of Birmingham, Inc.

Arkansas
- Argenta Community Development Corporation
- Universal Housing Development Corporation

Georgia
- NeighborWorks Columbus
- Resources for Residents and Communities of Georgia, Inc.

Kentucky
- Community Ventures Corporation
- Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises
- Frontier Housing, Inc.
- New Directions Housing Corporation
- The Housing Partnership, Inc.

Louisiana
- Neighborhood Housing Services of New Orleans, Inc.
- Providence Community Housing
- Southern Mutual Help Association

Mississippi
- Hope Community Development Agency
- Hope Enterprise Corporation

North Carolina
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership, Inc.
- DHIC, Inc.
- Durham Community Land Trustees
- Mountain Housing Opportunities, Inc.

South Carolina
- Family Services, Inc.
- Spartanburg Housing Development Corporation

Tennessee
- Affordable Housing Resources, Inc.
- Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise, Inc.
- Knox Housing Partnership, Inc.
- United Housing, Inc.

Virginia
- AHC Inc.
- Community Housing Partners Corporation

West Virginia
- CommunityWorks In West Virginia, Inc.
- HomeOwnership Center, Inc.

Progressive States Network

http://www.progressivestates.org

Progressive States Network engages and builds the capacity of state and national leaders to advance public policy solutions that uphold America's promise to be a just and equitable democracy. The network provides policy resources on broadband, election reform, green jobs and infrastructure, healthcare, immigration, tax and budget reform, and worker's rights.

Progressive Technology Project (PTP)

www.progressivetech.org

PTP's Partnership Project is a year-long intensive program designed to significantly increase organizational infrastructure and skills for long-term, large-scale work. PTP's PowerBase is an online database software specifically designed for groups engaged in community organizing. PTP's Innovation and Integration Partnership program is designed to help groups bridge the gaps between communications, fundraising, organizing, voter engagement, and technology and bring them together in a seamless unit that amplifies and extends the scope of its organizing efforts. Participants include three organizations in Babcock's funding region – Friends and Families of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, and Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance.

Pushback Network (PBN)

pushbacknetwork.org

PBN began in 2005 as a dialogue among experienced, independent community-based groups. PBN's founders were leaders of organizations that had built long-term, on-the-ground operations within the most challenging social environments in the country. They formed PBN to "push back" against what they considered to be shortsighted, tactical approaches to community organizing and electoral work. PBN connects the infrastructures of well-established, high-performance community organizing groups from across the country to achieve a breakthrough in civic participation. Each state in the Network is led by anchor organizations which guide strategic planning and coordinate the development of broad-based alliances of on-the-ground, grassroots workers, activists and ordinary residents committed to change.

PBN has key members in three states within Babcock's funding region, Alabama, Kentucky, and Mississippi:

• Greater Birmingham Ministries (AL)
• Arise Citizens' Policy Project (AL)
• Kentuckians for the Commonwealth
• Kentucky Jobs with Justice
• Southern Echo (MS)
• Catalyst Roundtable (MS)

Southeast Immigrant Rights Network (SEIRN)

http://seirn.squarespace.com

Co-founded and incubated by the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, SEIRN supports immigrant

rights organizations, fosters regional collaboration and peer exchange, strengthens alliances with the progressive movement, and facilitates joint analysis and action on issues of common concern.

State Fiscal Analysis Initiative (SFAI)

www.state.fiscal.org

A project of the national Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, SFAI builds organizational capacity for state-level budget and tax analysis, with a specific focus on the concerns of low- to moderate-income people. SFAI has established an affiliate in 33 states and 8 more are underway.

The following SFAI affiliates operate in nine states within Babcock's funding region:

- Arise Citizen's Policy Project (Alabama)
- Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
- Georgia Budget and Policy Institute
- Kentucky Center for Economic Policy (in development)
- Louisiana Budget Project (in development)
- Mississippi Economic Policy Center
- North Carolina Budget and Tax Center
- The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis (Virginia)
- West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy

No SFAI affiliates exist in Tennessee or South Carolina.

State Voices

www.statevoices.org

State Voices is a national network that organizes progressive "c3 tables" at the state level to help organizations working in historically underrepresented communities break out of their narrowly defined and out-dated issue silos to come together and win policy and civic engagement victories. The table creates a shared space to build trust, share resources, and cooperate through tools like the voter file, polling, planning tools, messaging campaigns, and links to donors. State Voices often re-grants funds to the state tables.

State Voices has established tables in 17 states, but only two within Babcock's funding region – North Carolina and Virginia. The national organization also offers some tools to states that do not yet have a staffed table.

Voices for America's Children

www.voices.org

Voices for America's Children is the nation's largest network of multi-issue child advocacy organizations. Voices leads advocacy efforts at the community, state, and federal levels to improve the lives of all children, especially those most vulnerable, and their families. Policy focuses include equity and diversity, health, school readiness, school success, safety, and economic stability.

Voices has a member in each state of Babcock's funding region:

- VOICES for Alabama's Children
- Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
- Voices for Georgia's Children
- Kentucky Youth Advocates
- Agenda for Children (LA)
- Public Policy Center of Mississippi
- Action for Children North Carolina
- The Children's Trust of South Carolina
- Black Children's Institute of Tennessee
- Tennessee Commission on Children & Youth
- Voices for Virginia's Children
- West Virginia KIDS COUNT Fund

Working Poor Families Project (WPFP)

www.workingpoorfamilies.org

The Working Poor Families Project is a national initiative focused on state workforce development policies involving: 1) education and skills training for adults; 2) economic development; and 3) income and work supports. The WPFP supports state nonprofit groups to engage in a two-part, phased process that begins with an in-depth assessment of the economic conditions and state policies affecting working families and is followed by actions to strengthen those conditions and policies.

The state policy assessment process is conducted the first year a state nonprofit joins the WPFP. The assessment uses a framework of indicators provided by the WPFP to examine current economic conditions and related state policies and programs. This examination culminates in a State Policy Assessment Report that points out where a state's investments and policies stand in relation to other states and the nation. Most importantly, the report recommends actions for improving state policies and program operations.

Following the release of the state report, WPFP groups engage in the Strengthening State Policy Initiative that involves educating key stakeholders on the opportunities to improve state workforce development systems and policies. Each group develops a policy agenda then works to implement that agenda with other stakeholders such as community-based organizations, state and local nonprofit groups, associations of education providers, employers, and state agencies.

WPFP has partners in five states within Babcock's funding region:

- Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges
- Georgia Budget and Policy Institute
- Kentucky Center for Economic Policy
- Mississippi Economic Policy Center
- North Carolina Justice Center

Appendix B: Network Presence in the States

	AL	AR	GA	KY	LA	MS	NC	SC	TN	VA	WV
Appleseed	•		•		•			•			
Applied Research Center											
Alliance for Appalachia				•					•	•	•
Center for Community Change											
Community Catalyst	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
CMOP	•		•	•	•				•		
CFED											
EARN	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•
Four State Savings Partnership							•	•		•	•
Kirwan Institute				•	•		•		•		
NACEDA	•	•	•				•	•	•	•	
NALCAB	•				•	•	•	•	•		
NLIHC	•	•	•	•	•		•	•		•	
Neighbor-Works	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Progressive States Network				•	•	•					
PTP				•	•	•					
Pushback Network	•			•		•					
SEIRN	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•		
SFAI	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•
State Voices							•			•	
Voices for America's Children	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
WPFP		•	•	•		•	•				

Appendix C: Grantees Representing State Policy Infrastructure

The following grantees are part of the progressive state policy infrastructure. All were invited to participate in the survey for this study.

Alabama

Alabama Appleseed
http://www.alabamaappleseed.org

The mission of Alabama Appleseed is to identify root causes of injustice and inequality and to develop and advocate for solutions that will improve the lives of all Alabamians. We work for constructive and lasting systemic change of policies and practices in Alabama that detrimentally and unfairly affect residents of the state. We seek to make legal and social systems better serve Alabama citizens, and we are dedicated to creating a more just and equitable society in Alabama. Through a combination of education, advocacy and policy expertise, we craft and promote lasting, practical solutions to systemic problems. We work in partnership with community and statewide leaders and organizations, academia, the legal and judicial communities, the business community, and a broad spectrum of volunteers.

Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform Foundation
http://www.constitutionalreform.org

Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, public interest group dedicated to educating the people of Alabama about the 1901 constitution and the need for reform, as well as encouraging citizen involvement in the reform process. ACCR's mission is to provide credible, nonpartisan advocacy of constitutional reform and to educate Alabama's citizenry about constitutional reform proposals.

Alabama Poverty Project
http://alabamapossible.org

Alabama Possible is a campaign from the Alabama Poverty Project. The Alabama Poverty Project mobilizes Alabamians to eliminate poverty through strategic partnerships with higher education institutions, community partners, policymakers and faith-based organizations. Our supporters are committed to leveraging their collective assets to develop creative solutions to end poverty. We provide a wide range of services, including professional development opportunities, on-site presentations, and information services in response to requests from our members and their community partners.

Arise Citizens' Policy Project
http://arisecitizens.org

Arise Citizens' Policy Project (ACPP), founded in 1994, is a statewide nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of 150 congregations and community groups and some 1,400 individuals united in their belief that low-income people are suffering because of state policy decisions. Through ACPP, groups and individuals join together to promote state policies that improve the lives of low-income Alabamians. In a state that by many measures is the worst place for poor people to live in the United States, ACPP believes acts of charity are vital, but they are not enough; we must

work to improve harmful state policies. ACPP provides a structure in which Alabamians can engage in public debates with the goal of improving the welfare of all Alabamians. Donations to ACPP, a 501(c)3 organization, are tax-deductible. ACPP's sister organization, Alabama Arise, is an advocacy coalition comprising the same membership.

Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama
http://www.focalfocal.org

Improving the lives of children and families in Alabama has been the mission of the Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama (FOCAL) since its founding in 1972. Our first members were child care programs run by African-American women in rural areas of Alabama. These women were determined to meet the requirements to become licensed child care facilities and care for the children in their communities. During nearly 40 years of existence, FOCAL has adapted to meet the needs of children and families as economic and political conditions shifted. We remain a grassroots organization, led by our constituency. Our core programs are child care training, leadership development, advocacy, and organizing. We have expanded to embrace a broader membership, work in partnership with a number of other organizations addressing issues for working families, and expand our use of tools for personal and community development.

Greater Birmingham Ministries
http://www.gbm.org

Greater Birmingham Ministries is a multi-faith, multi-racial organization dedicated to serving people in need, pursuing justice, and building stronger communities. GBM began in 1969 when three different denominations each launched new ministry efforts to respond more effectively to people in need and to seek a faithful community of justice and peace in Birmingham. These three efforts, begun by the United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church and the United Presbyterian Church (now Presbyterian Church USA), merged in 1971 and set the pattern for GBM's work as shared, ecumenical ministry. Today GBM is sponsored by 20 different faith communities, making GBM now an interfaith as well as ecumenical organization. GBM has also worked consistently on the hard, slow work of systems change, particularly in the realm of state constitutional reform, seeking to make the social networks of the community open and fair to all, especially to those with little economic and social power. At the heart of this commitment is a belief in human dignity which connects all of us to each other, regardless of our relative economic or social position.

Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama
http://www.hispanicinterest.org

The Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the social, civic and economic integration of Hispanic families and individuals in Alabama. ¡HICA! engages and empowers Alabama's Hispanic community and its numerous cultures as an economic and civic integrator, social-resource connector, and statewide educator.

Low-Income Housing Coalition of Alabama
http://www.collaborative-solutions.net/Programs/lihca.html

LIHCA is a coalition of Alabamians that joined together to address the housing crisis in our state and increase housing opportunities for those with the greatest financial need.

VOICES for Alabama's Children

http://www.alavoices.org

Established in 1992 through the vision of leading child advocates, VOICES for Alabama's Children was the first, and remains the only, organization to document the conditions of children in each of our state's 67 counties. From building public awareness to leading legislative advocacy efforts, all of VOICES' activities are based on a solid foundation of research. The organization's goal is to ensure that all Alabama children have the best chance to succeed in life. VOICES focuses on the issues that matter most to children and families: health, safety, education, and economic security.

Arkansas

Arkansas Advocates for Children

http://www.aradvocates.org

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families was founded in 1977 by a group of prominent Arkansans who believed that children needed an "independent force to provide information and education to parents and citizens about our state's policies toward children and families." For more than 30 years, AACF has provided leadership, research and advocacy to promote wide-ranging reforms that have improved the lives of Arkansas children, and we have never been afraid to lead the way when the need arose.

Arkansas Public Policy Panel

http://arpanel.org

Arkansas Public Policy Panel is a non-profit organization founded in 1963. We work for social justice by helping community people to organize, to grow as leaders, and to influence public policy at the local level and the state level. The Panel provides organizing, training, leader development and strategic planning services. In addition, the Panel also supports a diverse coalition of community groups and organizations that develop campaigns and lobby at the legislature as the Arkansas Citizens First Congress. The Citizens First Congress works to get laws passed that improve Arkansas schools, protect Arkansas' environment, change regressive tax structures, add citizen representation to state boards and commissions, strengthen civil rights, protect victims of violence, reform elections, hold government and corporations accountable and more.

Southern Bancorp Capital Partners

https://banksouthern.com/category/southern-bancorp-capital-partners

Southern is a unique organization that combines the vision, passion, and creativity of non-profit organizations with the stability and permanence of America's largest and most profitable rural development bank. Southern's family of companies includes traditional community banks and 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. The banking organizations are long-term members of their respective communities with the ability to influence both public and private policy initiatives and create local, state, and national support for Southern's community development work. Because of this unique public-private partnership, Southern is able to access both the grassroots individuals most affected by regional change as well as the community leadership base of professional, civic, and governmental institutions that traditional non-profit organizations are unable to reach. Southern's goal is to organize all of the above in a manner that promotes action and stimulates fundamental community change.

Georgia

Georgia Appleseed

http://www.gaappleseed.org

The Mission of Georgia Appleseed is to increase justice in Georgia through law and policy reform. Georgia Appleseed seeks a Georgia where the voices of the poor, the children and the marginalized are heard and where injustices that no one should endure are resolved.

Georgia Budget and Policy Institute

http://gbpi.org

The Georgia Budget & Policy Institute is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that strives to raise the level of public policy debate in the state of Georgia. Founded in 2004, GBPI uses research, analysis and education to advance policies and practices that improve the quality of life for all Georgians.

Georgia Justice Project

http://www.gjp.org

Georgia Justice Project (GJP) is celebrating 25 years of a better approach to indigent criminal defense. We defend people accused of crimes, and win or lose, stand with them while they rebuild their lives. Founded in 1986, our mission is to ensure justice for the indigent criminally accused and their families and to assist them in establishing crime-free lives and becoming productive citizens. We do this by offering free legal services coupled with a full range of social and employment services.

Kentucky

Community Farm Alliance

http://communityfarmalliance.org

Since 1985 Community Farm Alliance has been building positive relationships between farmers, consumers, legislators, and communities. From its humble beginnings in the farm crisis of the 1980s, Community Farm Alliances members, once predominately white farmers, twenty-five years later, are a diverse mix of urban, rural, farmers, non farmers, rich, poor, young and old. CFA members come in all shapes and colors and the "community" in Community Farm Alliance is not defined by geography but by the values of good stewardship of the land and water, and also of family and community. CFA members believe that the people most affected should lead in addressing their problems. CFA helps people organize and build leadership to define the problem, identify barriers, needed resources, and create a plan to make change. Through community organizing and strategic alliances, CFA works to bring a critical public voice to policy makers.

Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises

http://www.fahe.org

The goal of FAHE is to provide affordable quality housing to those in need. We started out doing this in Appalachia, but over time, our dream and reach has grown. We are a non-profit. Many folks think of a non-profit

organization as a charity. The service we provide is not a handout, but a helping hand that allows families in need a chance to obtain home ownership. We offer this assistance in many ways, including providing affordable, low-interest loans. These loans allow families to experience vast improvements in life such as heat in the winter, running water, and access to proper sanitation, which are not easy to come by in many rural Appalachian communities. FAHE does not do this alone. Our major strength is that we partner with 46 (and growing) non-profits across several states to form a powerful network that brings about real change.

Kentuckians for the Commonwealth
http://kftc.org

Kentuckians For The Commonwealth is a statewide citizens' organization working for a new balance of power and a just society. As we work together we build our strength, individually and as a group, and we find solutions to real life problems. We use direct action to challenge – and change – unfair political, economic and social systems. Our membership is open to all people who are committed to equality, democracy and non-violent change.

Kentucky Domestic Violence Association
http://www.kdva.org

The mission of KDVA is to end intimate partner violence, promote healthy relationships and engage communities through social change, economic empowerment, educational opportunities and other prevention strategies.

Kentucky Youth Advocates
http://www.kyyouth.org

KYA promotes positive changes and policies that impact children by providing research, timely publications on issues and collaborating with a variety of groups to craft policies that positively affect Kentucky's children, especially those who are poor and otherwise disadvantaged.

Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED)/KY Center on Economic Policy
http://www.maced.org/index.html
http://www.kypolicy.org

The Kentucky Center for Economic Policy (KCEP) seeks to improve the quality of life for all Kentuckians through research, analysis and education on important policy issues facing the Commonwealth. KCEP produces research briefs on timely issues; promotes public conversation about those issues through media and presentations; and advocates to decision makers on the need for policies that move all Kentuckians forward. KCEP launched in 2011 and is a project of the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED). MACED is a community development organization that seeks to create economic alternatives that work for people and places in eastern Kentucky and Central Appalachia. Founded in 1976, MACED's efforts include promoting enterprise development through capital investment and capacity building; operating demonstration programs that test new development ideas; and conducting research on public policy issues.

Louisiana

Louisiana Progress

www.louisianaprogress.org

Louisiana Progress informs, engages, and mobilizes community leaders, activists, advocates and policymakers to lead Louisiana into the 21st century.

One Voice Louisiana

http://uniteonevoice.org/ovla

One Voice is excited to expand our reach into Louisiana, building toward our role as a southern regional hub for policy advocacy, base-building and training. Much like our successful work in Mississippi, we will work to advance the development of a progressive advocacy and legislative infrastructure and nonpartisan technical assistance and training for state and local elected officials in the State of Louisiana. As we hit the ground running in Louisiana, One Voice is working directly with elected officials and communities to increase awareness of key legislative issues, as well as identification of entry points in the political process where all voices can be heard. Key to our approach is using the tools of research and policy analysis, trained and connected community leadership, and building community-based structures through which broad public involvement can be organized and sustained. It is our hope to use our proven, strategic approach to achieve system change throughout the state by connecting the engagement and advocacy efforts of grassroots groups with progressive policy makers.

PICO/LA Inter-Faith Together

http://www.picolouisiana.org

PICO LIFT's mission is to provide families and religious congregations in Louisiana with a voice in the decisions that shape their lives and communities. Established in 1988, PICO LIFT (Louisiana Interfaith Together) is the largest statewide grassroots organizing effort in Louisiana. It represents more than 100 faith communities in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and 12 other towns and cities.

Mississippi

Hope Enterprise Corporation/Enterprise Corporation of the Delta

http://www.hope-ec.org

HOPE is a private, nonprofit community development financial institution (CDFI), that provides commercial financing, mortgage loans and technical assistance to support businesses, entrepreneurs, home buyers and community development projects. HOPE's mission is to strengthen communities, build assets and improve lives of people in economically distressed areas of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Memphis, Tennessee. HOPE also sponsors Hope Credit Union, which provides a range of financial products and services that meet the needs of low- and moderate-income residents in its four-state service area. Since 1994, HOPE has generated over $1 billion in financing for entrepreneurs, homebuyers and community development projects, and assisted more than 40,000 individuals in low-income communities throughout the Mid South.

MS Center for Justice
http://www.mscenterforjustice.org

The Mississippi Center for Justice opened its doors in 2003, giving Mississippi a critical capacity for social change: a home grown, non-profit public interest law firm that pursues racial and economic justice through advocacy for systemic change. The Mississippi Center for Justice carries out its mission through a community lawyering approach that advances specific social justice campaigns in partnership with national and local organizations and community leaders. The Mississippi Center for Justice has three offices in Mississippi, located in Jackson, Indianola and Biloxi. Staffed by a team of attorneys, advocates and others, the Mississippi Center for Justice is dedicated to developing policies and strategies that combat discrimination and poverty throughout Mississippi. The Center engages the services of pro bono attorneys from across the United States. To sustain and feed a pipeline for future services, the Center also cultivates law students through spring, summer and winter internships during which law students spend their time working in Mississippi and assisting the Center with its campaigns. The traditional strategies of policy advocacy and litigation are vital components of the Mississippi Center for Justice's community lawyering tool kit. Likewise, public education, outreach, community organizing, media advocacy and other forms of communication strategies that comprise successful campaigns are important tools as well. Since its inception, the Center has been at the forefront of policy battles on the state and federal levels to bring about systemic change that improves the social justice environment for all Mississippians.

MS Low-Income Child Care Initiative
http://www.mschildcare.org

MLICCI was founded in 1998 by child care providers, parents and community leaders who gathered to share concerns about child care in Mississippi and to explore how they could work together to address those concerns. Together, they improve the quality of child care for all or Mississippi's low-income children; advocate for better policies and greater public investment in child care subsidies; and build a strong, grassroots constituency for the working poor and their children.

MS NAACP/One Voice Mississippi
http://www.naacpms.org
http://uniteonevoice.org

One Voice, formally known as the Community Policy, Research & Training Institute (CPRTI), grew out of the work undertaken by the Mississippi State Conference NAACP State Conference in response to housing, education, civil rights, and related policy advocacy needs facing historically disadvantaged communities in the wake of the 2005 hurricanes. That work revealed significant needs in the non-profit sector. One such need was access to current and relevant data needed to do policy analysis. Another was a need for connections between trained and networked community leadership, and non-partisan, community-based structures through which broad public involvement could be organized and sustained. One Voice, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was formed to bridge these gaps. Through collaborative efforts with traditional and non-traditional allies, One Voice has played a pivotal role in building alliances that transcend organizational and racial boundaries. Our partners and supporters are committed to building a strong, informed electorate that rejects polarization and seeks to improve the lives of Mississippi residents across the state.

Southern Echo

http://southernecho.org

Southern Echo is a leadership development, education and training organization working to develop effective accountable grassroots leadership in the African-American communities in rural Mississippi and the surrounding region through comprehensive training and technical assistance programs. This work has carried Echo staff into 12 other states in the south and southwest. The underlying goal is to empower local communities through effective community organizing work, in order to create a process through which community people can build the broad-based organizations necessary to hold the political, economic, educational, and environmental systems accountable to the needs and interests of the African-American community. A special emphasis for Echo is the active inclusion of young people, in an inter-generational model of community organizing, on the same basis as adults.

North Carolina

Blueprint NC

http://blueprintnc.org

Blueprint NC is a partnership of public policy, advocacy, and grassroots organizing nonprofits dedicated to achieving a better, fairer, healthier North Carolina through the development of an integrated communications and civic engagement strategy. Ultimately, Blueprint aims to influence state policy in NC so that residents of the state benefit from more progressive policies such as better access to health care, higher wages, more affordable housing, a safer, cleaner environment, and access to reproductive health services.

Center for Responsible Lending

http://www.responsiblelending.org

The Center for Responsible Lending is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization that works to protect homeownership and family wealth by fighting predatory lending practices. Our focus is on consumer lending: primarily mortgages, payday loans, credit cards, bank overdrafts and auto loans. Since we began in 2002, we have witnessed, studied, and fought against outrageous lending abuses that strip billions of dollars from American families.

NC Housing Coalition

http://www.nchousing.org

NC Housing Coalition's purpose is to educate the public about housing issues facing low and moderate-income households and to lead an advocacy effort that empowers residents to impact housing needs and issues that affect their lives and those across the state. The coalition's mission is to lead a campaign for housing that ensures working families, people in crisis, seniors and persons with disabilities may live with dignity and opportunity.

NC IDA and Asset Building Collaborative

http://www.ncidacollaborative.org

The Collaborative is a private, statewide nonprofit organization serving all of North Carolina. We are the lead agency for the North Carolina Saves campaign and work at the statewide level and in communities to implement and promote strategies to build economic security for North Carolina families. Our mission is to promote programs and policies across North Carolina that build family economic security and individual financial capability.

NC Justice Center

http://www.ncjustice.org

As a leading progressive research and advocacy organization, our mission is to eliminate poverty in North Carolina by ensuring that every household in the state has access to the resources, services and fair treatment it needs to achieve economic security. To make opportunity and prosperity for all a reality, we work toward jobs that are safe, pay a living wage, and provide benefits; access to quality and affordable health care; quality public education for every child; consumer protections from abusive practices; safe and affordable housing; public investments that expand opportunities for economic security; a fair and stable revenue system that adequately funds public investments while fairly distributing tax responsibility; fair treatment for everyone in North Carolina – regardless of race, ethnicity, or country of origin.

Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI)

http://www.rafiusa.org

RAFI cultivates markets, policies and communities that support thriving, socially just and environmentally sound family farms. We work nationally and internationally, focusing on North Carolina and the southeastern United States.

South Carolina

Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment

http://www.cafesc.com

CAFÉ is a non-profit organization that promotes economic justice in South Carolina. Formed in Greenville in 1980, CAFÉ is now a statewide group with over 5000 individual members across the state. We at CAFÉ believe that everyone has a moral right to fair employment to work that is free from bias, dishonesty and in-justice. It is reasonable and right to expect fair employment. The key to fair employment is having strong worker organizations that have the power to make needed changes on our jobs, in our communities and at the State House. Workers have few rights in South Carolina because most of us don't belong to unions or other types of worker organizations. CAFÉ provides a new way for people to join together to fight for fair employment, including those of us who're not represented by unions.

Low Country Housing Trust

http://www.lowcountryhousingtrust.org

LHT is an affordable housing advocate and lender that raises and pools capital from public and private investments to create a revolving loan fund that finances critically needed housing. Its mission is to build vibrant, sustainable communities by increasing the availability of affordable housing and to act as a catalyst to meet the fundamental needs of underserved neighborhoods. By working with local governments, developers, community leaders, non-profits and businesses, LHT addresses the housing crisis facing the local community. Serving as the model for housing trusts throughout the state, LHT bridges the gap between governments and developers; developers and non-profits; and families and the need for affordable housing.

SC Association of CDCs

http://www.communitydevelopmentsc.org

The South Carolina Association of Community Development Corporations is a state-wide trade association of non-profit, community-based development corporations within the state's economically distressed communities. The SCACDC places particular emphasis on promoting development in communities that have been left out of the economic mainstream, especially minority communities. The mission of SCACDC is to raise the quality of life for low-wealth families and communities by advancing the community economic development industry in South Carolina through the capacity building of local community development corporations through the provision of Grassroots Leadership Development, Access to Capital, Advocacy, and Technical Assistance. The SCACDC works to increase the participation of the State's financial institutions in community economic development initiatives by facilitating public/private partnerships. The association educates the state's legislature, state agencies, local governments, major state and national foundations, religious denominations, colleges and universities and lending institutions as to their potential role in creating opportunities and overcoming obstacles for community-based economic development throughout the state of South Carolina.

SC Fair Share Education Fund

http://www.scfairshare.org

From the beginning, Fair Share took a two-pronged approach. The first involved statewide issue advocacy. Over the years, that included a broad array of issues; initially we opposed efforts to undermine our tort system, fought for fair automobile insurance and helped pass legislation to outlaw rape within marriage. In the mid-1990s, Fair Share expanded those issues to include welfare reform, predatory lending and health care access and affordability. The more we worked on health care access and affordability, the more we came to see budgets and the taxes that fund them as central to the ability to fund health care. Fair Share became a leading voice on budget and tax issues, pushing to increase the cigarette tax, arguing for fair tax policies, opposing the sales tax for property tax swap in Act 388, refocusing the General Assembly from spending caps to rainy day funds and bringing folks together to oppose cutting vital services rather than taking a balanced approach to serve South Carolina families by increasing revenues as well. Over the years, Fair Share worked across party lines and built and worked in diverse coalitions. At the same time, Fair Share worked to build up South Carolina organizations and to provide tools for activists that go beyond Fair Share's particular policy issues.

Tennessee

TN Alliance for Progress

http://www.taptn.org

TAP is a statewide organization with a mission to foster sustainable communities in Tennessee. TAP believes that we need to articulate a hopeful vision for the future based on the idea that we are all in it together. TAP works to facilitate true political and economic democracy where people should participate in decisions that affect their lives. TAP advocates for an economy which serves all Tennesseans well and fairly and which protects the environment for generations to come. TAP's current main policy initiative is creating green jobs as pathways to prosperity. We work with partner organizations throughout the state as hosts of the Tennessee Green Jobs Network. We are a key organizer of the Green-Collar Jobs Task Force of Nashville/Davidson County and are assisting the formation of initiatives in Knoxville and Memphis. Nashville also has an active Women in Green Jobs Committee.

TN Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition

http://www.tnimmigrant.org

TIRRC is a statewide, immigrant and refugee-led collaboration whose mission is to empower immigrants and refugees throughout Tennessee to develop a unified voice, defend their rights, and create an atmosphere in which they are recognized as positive contributors to the state.

Tennesseans for Fair Taxation

http://www.fairtaxation.org/home/index.php

Tennesseans for Fair Taxation works to create a more fair and progressive tax structure that ensures adequate revenues for the benefit of all Tennesseans. TFT works through education, coalition building, and grassroots organizing with diverse groups and individuals. In other words, TFT seeks Revenue with Justice for Tennessee!

Virginia

Just Children/Legal Aid Justice Center

http://justice4all.org

The Legal Aid Justice Center offers free legal services to low-income families throughout Central Virginia and to at-risk children, low-wage immigrant workers, institutionalized persons, and other vulnerable populations statewide. Through legal representation in civil actions, community education, and statewide advocacy, Legal Aid works to alleviate our clients' immediate problems while addressing the systemic issues that keep people in poverty.

VA Organizing Project

http://virginia-organizing.org

Virginia Organizing is a statewide grassroots organization dedicated to challenging injustice by empowering people in local communities to address issues that affect the quality of their lives. Virginia Organizing especially encourages the participation of those who have traditionally had little or no voice in our society. By building relationships with individuals and groups throughout the state, Virginia Organizing strives to get them to work together, democratically and non-violently, for change.

West Virginia

Challenge West Virginia

http://challengewv.org

Challenge West Virginia is a statewide organization of parents, educators and other West Virginians committed to maintaining and improving small community schools. Challenge members believe that state education policy which has resulted in the closing of more than a fourth of West Virginia's small schools during the 1990s does not serve the best interest of many children, especially those from low-income families who live in rural areas. The organization's goal is to change state education policy through a sustained grassroots movement which helps parents become full partners in the education system and which creates a future where our children believe in themselves, value their communities and receive the best possible public education.

Coal River Mountain Watch

http://www.crmw.net

The mission of Coal River Mountain Watch is to stop the destruction of our communities and environment by mountaintop removal mining, to improve the quality of life in our area and to help rebuild sustainable communities.

Community Works WV

http://www.communityworkswv.org

CommunityWorks in West Virginia, Inc. works in cooperation with its network of 27 member organizations providing homes people can afford. We are a trusted organization with services in all areas of the state, and a large portion of the central Appalachian region. CommunityWorks supports the success of its members by offering technical assistance and training opportunities, advocacy and access to capital in the form of development loans to members and mortgage loans to the customers of its network of members.

Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition

http://www.ohvec.org

The Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, formed in 1987, is a 501-c-3 nonprofit organization. Our mission is to organize and maintain a diverse grassroots organization dedicated to the improvement and preservation of the environment through education, grassroots organizing and coalition building, leadership development and media outreach. Our work encompasses much of West Virginia.

WV Center on Budget and Policy

http://www.wvpolicy.org

The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy is a policy research organization that is nonpartisan, nonprofit, and statewide. The Center's research and analysis is designed to support informed public dialog and policy in West Virginia. The Center consults and collaborates with other organizations to ensure that its analyses are relevant and timely and strives to be a knowledgeable and respected source of credible information on public budget and fiscal issues for policymakers, advocates, media, and the public.

MR
Bf

helping to move people and places out of poverty